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HUMAN AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF URBANIZATION: EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION ON FAMILY LIFE IN THE ECAFE REGION

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Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	The Role of the Family	6
III.	Rural-Urban Migration and its Effects	8

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern urbanization is not a phenomenon that can be considered in isolation. It is part of a vast dynamic process that has many causes and varied aspects. It is intimately connected with economic development in general and with industrialization in particular. In the West, urbanization was followed and accompanied by, and related to, the end of feudalism, technological innovation, huge increases in population, religious upheavals, the spread of education, the development of cheap, fast and safe transportation, and many other far-reaching economic, social, scientific and cultural changes. The industrial revolution, encompassing this entire complex of innovation and change was a long drawn-out process, the length of which must not be obscured by concentration on a few of the apparent climaxes.

In Asia all these factors have been at work, to differing extents perhaps in the various countries, and in many of them an important additional influence has played a role in changing the social and economic fabric of society - foreign rule. The colonial powers injected into the old society not only different ideas and values, but often imposed political structures and economic demands that affected immediately much of the life of the Asian countries and indirectly influenced almost every aspect of economic, social and even personal relationships.[1/]

/There are

1/ UNESCO, "Problèmes de désorganisation sociale liés a l'industrialisation et à l'urbanisation dans les pays en cours de développement économique rapide", Paper presented to the First United Nations World Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, 1955. (Document No. A/CONF.6/c.3/L.2); Norton S. Ginsberg, "The Great City in Southeast Asia", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. IX, No.5, March 1955, p. 458; Avabai B. Wadia, "Some Aspects of Family Welfare in India", Marriage and Family Living, Vol. XVII, No.3, August 1955, p. 226. Bert F. Hoselitz, "The City, the Factory, and Economic Growth", American Economic Review, Vol. XLV, No.2, May 1955, p. 167. An altogether different phenomenon is the fact that many of the large Asian cities, accounting for much of the urbanization of a number of countries, were populated by immigrants from other Asian countries. Burma, Indonesia and Malaya, in parcicubr, received influxes of Indian and Chinese immigrants. Large numbers of them settled in cities. See, "International Migrations in the Far East during Recent Times - The Countries of Immigration", United Nations, Population Bulletin, No.2, October 1952, pp. 29, 36, 40; Norton S. Ginsberg, op.cit., p. 459; Eunice Cooper, "Urbanization in Malaya", Population Studies, Vol. V, No. 2, November 1951, pp. 117-131.

There are thus two reasons for not attempting to view urbanization, or economic development as a whole, in Asia as merely a repetition, some centuries later, of a process which the West has undergone. Much of the urbanization that occurred in Asia in the past was not, as in Europe, an expression of economic growth and re-orientation, but rather an expression of foreign commercial, political and administrative, and military interests.1/ Secondly, the difference in timing is of vital importance. There is no reason

> "...to assume that the pattern of development will necessarily - or desirably - be the one followed by the West. Indeed, the situation is quite different if only for the reason that Western development has already taken place and the present end-products of this development are clearly evident. Improvements - in sanitation, education, communications, labour policy, social services, etc. - that developed in a slow and more or less experimental fashion in Western countries, are being deliberately taken over in their end-form in South and Southeast Asia, while there is at the same time a conscious effort to avoid the mistakes ..." 2/

The time lag, potentially of great value, does however present some disadvantages. The main one perhaps is that vast population increases have preceded economic development. The sheer magnitude of the populations undergoing rapid industrialization and urbanization multiplies and complicates the social consequences of economic development.3/

/The analysis

1/ See D.W. Fryer, "The 'Million City' in Southeast Asia", Geographical Review, Vol. XLIII, No. 4, October 1953, p. 475, and works cited in "Aspects of Urbanization in ECAFE countries", Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East, Vol. IV, No.1, May 1953, p. 4.

2/ United Nations, Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation, (Document No. E/CN.5/267/Rev.1) p. 180.

3/ "The population of Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century - that is, at the central point of western industrialization - was hardly more than three per cent of the present population of India alone". United Nations, Processes and Problems of Industrialization in Under-developed Countries, (Document No. E/2670, Sales No. 1955.II.B.1), p. 119.

The analysis of the effects of urbanization on family life, or the social structure in general, cannot therefore be simply derived from analogy. The task is further complicated by the fact that the region is a vast one comprising many different peoples, cultures, religions and types of social organizations. Although urbanization is proceeding in every country of the area - but by no means at the same rate - it would be misleading to regard its effects as the same everywhere. Even within a country such as India regional and even local differences are very great, not so much in the manner in which towns grow but in the way in which old patterns - particularly of family life - are being adapted, transformed or even destroyed.

Of all these difficulties, the one presenting the greatest complexity is probably the set of circumstances first mentioned relating to the many other facets of the process of economic development. The effect of urbanization on family life cannot be isolated and weighed or assessed in some simple way. A complex of changes is involved, of which urbanization is only one aspect or expression. The relationship of urbanization to family life is not one of simple cause and effect, but is rather an intricate inter-relationship. The factors that make for urbanization, such as economic development, cultural change and so on, also affect the family directly - even where the great majority of families take no part themselves in the process of urbanization. Moreover, even where there is direct inter-action between urbanization and changes in family life, the causal relationship functions in both directions. That is to say, the evolution in types of family structure may be such as to promote or to retard urbanization. It has been suggested, for instance, that the strength or weakness of the institution of the traditional extended family affects the geographical mobility of the overwhelmingly rural population. Restricted mobility resulting from this institution could account for a relatively slow growth of cities in certain countries.

/Some aspects

Some aspects of urbanization lend themselves to study and analysis on a country-wide basis. This is probably true of the assessment of some demographic consequences of urbanization. National population censuses, where they exist, can yield information on the proportion of the population living in towns, and on the sex and age composition of the urban and rural populations. If censuses are taken periodically, additional information on such matters as the rate of growth of the urban population, the volume of internal migration, etc., may be obtained. A summary of demographic information on this subject is presented in another paper.[1/]

The effect of urbanization on family life, however, is a subject for which it is much more difficult to obtain statistical or other factual data. Apart from the impressions of observers, only a relatively small number of limited, local studies are available. There is great danger in drawing conclusions from such studies, covering an infinitesimal part of Asia's population, and applying them to the area as a whole.

In this paper, therefore, no attempt will be made to draw over-all conclusions affecting the area or family life in its entirety, nor will generalizations be made to which very many exceptions would have to apply. Furthermore, no attempt will be made to give detailed descriptions of the various types of family structures that are to be found in the countries of the area or in their constituent parts. A number of general treatises on the subject exist.

/With the

1/ Demographic Aspects of Urbanization in the ECAFE Region.

With the exception of Japan, the paper attempts to cover the entire ECAFE region. It was felt that in view of the different conditions prevailing in that country, no consideration should be given here to the effects of urbanization on Japanese family life.[1/]

II. THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

The structure of the family has been and continues to be, diverse in the various countries of Asia. In the two largest countries, China and India, the prevailing family is an extended or joint one, encompassing a number of successive generations, and with a strong, generally patriarchal, head. The simple conjugal family - parents and unmarried children - is however regarded as prevalent in some countries of the region, particularly Indonesia and Thailand, and intermediate types - including one or more married children and other relatives - are found elsewhere, as in the Philippines and in Japan.

The functions of the family, perhaps even more so than its structure, reflect the social and economic life of the country in which it is found. In pre-industrial societies, and in countries only starting the process of industrialization, the family is a social and an economic unit. Socially, the welfare of the aged and the handicapped, educational functions and the

/care of the

1/ Social aspects of urbanization in Japan are treated in: Irene B. Taeuber, "Family, Migration and Industrialization", American Sociological Review, Vol. 16, No. 2, April 1951, pp. 149-157; John C. Pelzel, "Some Social Factors bearing upon Japanese Population", American Sociological Review, Vol.15, No. 1, Feb. 1950, pp. 20-25; Arthur F. Raper, "Some Recent Changes in Japanese Village Life", Rural Sociology, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 1951, pp. 4-5; Kizaemon Ariga, "The Family in Japan", Marriage and Family Living, Vol. 16, No.4, Nov. 1954, pp. 362-368.

care of the sick, the performance of certain religious rites, and many other duties are a family responsibility. At the same time, the family is a productive unit, undertaking collectively the various activities, mainly in agriculture and handicrafts, that support all its members.[1/] In a money economy, where income is increasingly derived from employment for wages, or the sale of services or commodities for cash, the earning of a livelihood tends to become a responsibility not of the whole family, but of individuals. With the loss of this fundamental economic function, other roles of the family may also be affected. It becomes increasingly typical for married couples to set up house for themselves, often at considerable distances from the wife's and husband's original homes. Parents and parents-in-law, unmarried and widowed brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts tend to be excluded more and more from the family household.

Urbanization usually accelerates and accentuates the change. Housing problems in the towns limit the number of family members who can live together; wage employment is the antithesis of family production. The smaller urban family thus loses its old self-sufficiency. It must rely increasingly on help and support from outside the family circle. This reliance on the outside applies not only to the economic field, in economic activity, but to the social field. The town-dwellers' family group can no longer cope with the consequences of unemployment, sickness and old age. It may not be able to meet all the requirements of child care. Many non-material, social functions of the family also disappear or at least shrink in importance. Education, entertainment and the many emotional satisfactions derived from religious ritual and large family gatherings for special events must either be provided by outside associations or not at all. This limitation in the functions of the

/family goes

1/ "Rural families come close to being self-sufficient economic units". V. Thamavit and R. Golden, "The Family in Thailand", Marriage and Family Living. Vol. 16, No. 4, Nov. 1954, p. 387.

family goes hand-in-hand with a reduction in its extent, in the number of relatives who are considered a part of it. It follows that the change is greatest wherever the family was most extensive in size and most inclusive in functions.

The above are general trends in family life noted during the process of urbanization in various parts of the world. The limited information available on urbanization in the Asian countries under question suggests that these observations are probably valid for these countries as well.

III. RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Rural-urban migration, the mechanism that brings about urbanization, is a phenomenon that can be described more easily in its results than in its operation. The volume of the movement, the characteristics of the persons constituting it and the many features on which information is required for all types of social, demographic and economic analysis, are very imperfectly known even in highly advanced industrial countries with developed statistical and research services. In the so-called economically under-developed countries information is very scanty and often non-existent.[1/]

In studying the social implications of rural-urban migratory movements, particularly their effects on family life, this absence of data is a severe handicap, making it difficult to judge the extent of the impact of many factors. The migratory increase in the population

../of towns

1/ United Nations, Proceedings of the World Population Conference, Summary Report, New York, 1955 (Sales No. 1955.XIII.8), p. 92.

of towns over a period is a net figure, the result of far larger numbers of people moving into and from towns. The over-all effect on family life of urbanization in a country, a cultural group or a large region obviously depends on the number of people, or the number of families, involved in the process. It is precisely this point on which knowledge is most conspicuously lacking.

The causes of rural-urban migration, the motives that prompt the villager to go to the town, are a subject of speculation and isolated studies on the part of sociologists and economists. Some studies emphasize the attracting features of urban life, industrial occupations and so on. Others stress the repelling features of village destitution and the pressure of population on land. This pressure manifests itself in may ways, including excessive under-employment, aggravated burdens of debt and increased needs for major expenditures. Although the weight of opinion seems to be in favour of the latter view - that migration to the towns is largely a flight from rural poverty - a number of studies on the social status and the financial situation of recent arrivals in towns indicate that it is not always the poorest villagers who take part in the movement. 1/

It would appear in any case that the advantages and disadvantages of urban and rural life in the underdeveloped countries are relative, the choice for an individual or a family being one of the apparently lesser evils.

The Family Character of Rural-urban Migration and its Permanence

The question of how much of the movement to the cities and towns is permanent - of whether many of the new urban dwellers intend, after periods of varying length, to return to their former rural habitat - is clearly linked to the family composition of the migrant streams. This again is a subject on which but little information exists, and what there is does not give a single or a clear answer. The age and sex composition of urban populations is only one

/indicator

1/ For example, Noel P. Gist, Selective Migration in Urban South India, paper presented at the World Population Conference, 1954, United Nations document E/CONF.13/357, p.9; E. Eames, "Some aspects of urban migration from a village in North Central India", The Eastern Anthropologist, Vol. VIII, No. 1, Sept.-Nov. 1954, p. 13.

indicator of the position. In most cases in the region it shows the predominance of younger males, bachelors and married men separated either temporarily or permanently from their families. The permanence or not of the separation is a critical factor in the effect of urbanization on family life but hardly, if ever, apparent from demographic data. There is much evidence, however, that, at least in the initial stages of urbanization, this separation tends to be both frequent and temporary. "In most less developed countries", it has been found, "there is a constant flux of workers between industrial employment in towns and traditional agriculture in their home villages. They may work only long enough to collect the money they need to pay taxes or to fulfill other obligations; they often become homesick and dissatisfied with their food and quarters, particularly if they have left their wives in the villages..."[1/]

This impermanence of city-ward migration, involving as it does the return of the migrant to his village, helps to spread knowledge of urban life among the rural population, and in this way may make up to some extent for the non-migrants' lack of mobility. The cohesion of the family, however, is necessarily disrupted by the absence of the breadwinner, be it frequent or rare, long or short.[2/] The extent and nature of the disruption depend on many factors, some of which will be reviewed below. As urbanization progresses, as some reports suggest at least for certain areas, there is a tendency for

/ rural-urban

1/ United Nations, Processes and Problems of Industrialization in Underdeveloped Countries, op. cit., p. 21. See also Robert I. Crane, "Urbanism in India", The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LX, No. 5, March 1955, pp. 466-467.

2/ The disruption may be real and serious, even when the absence of a family member is necessary to maintain the family's level of living and he is virtually sent to the city in order that he may make cash contributions to the family's budget. This may apply particularly to the sending of very young family members to the towns for a temporary sojourn - and employment.

rural-urban migration to become more permanent and increasingly a movement of families rather than of individuals.[1]

It is perhaps at this point that a line must be drawn, essential in any treatment of this problem, between the process of urbanization and the condition of "urbanism". The former is a process of transition, of change; in the latter, adjustment has occurred, and patterns of family life, as most social aspects of living, have adjusted themselves to the town. While, of course, any study of urbanization must deal fully with the effects of town life and its problems, these persist well after the process of urbanization has come to a halt. For instance, many unsatisfactory features of social life that are ascribed to the effects of urbanization, such as juvenile delinquency and slums, are found to exist in various old-established cities, to which the influx from the country has virtually ceased, and where one can thus no longer speak of continuing urbanization.

Effect on Family Life

The major effect of urbanization on family life then is the effect of rapid change, a change affecting the breadwinner's mode of earning his livelihood, a change in the physical surroundings in which a family finds itself; altogether a change from the village to the town or city. For the majority of the Asian people, this involves a change in the very concept of "family". In many countries it is the size of the family, a fairly extended group in the native village, and the various relationships within it, that are immediately affected by the move to an urban environment.

In general, it has become accepted almost as a truism that urbanization is disruptive of family life. Family disorganization is said to be a regular feature of proletarian life in most growing cities.

/ To what

1/ P. Kokadanda Rao, "Urban Pull in India", in International Institute of Differing Civilizations, Record of the 27th Meeting, 1952, p. 222; Noel P. Gist, Selective Migration in Urban South India, op. cit., passim; Kingsley Davis, The Population of India and Pakistan, p. 149.

To what extent this is true and why it should be so are questions that do not lend themselves to a simple answer, nor to one that is applicable in different circumstances in different places.[1] An answer may have to be sought in an analysis of the general process of social transition involved in a large-scale economic and social re-orientation and re-organization. The preservation of pre-industrial ways of life in the city creates problems that may be insoluble but do not necessarily lead to the abandonment of these ways. The unfavourable conditions in which the newcomers settle in the towns aggravate and slow down the process of adaptation.[2]

It might even be said that the break-up of the traditional family is at the same time a result of urbanization and also in some ways a contributing cause. Economically, the extended family as a producing unit is not always able to meet the demands made upon it: increase of population, the destruction of handicrafts industries that occupied much of the time of the village family, and the creation of demands for new consumption goods have all reduced the "efficiency" of the family as an economic unit. Socially, the venerability alone of the rigid, traditional institution of the family - some four thousand years old in China - did not suffice to prevent all kinds of stresses from affecting it increasingly. There is much evidence that the introduction, usually from abroad, of ideas such as those concerning the rights of women,

/ individualism,

1/ A short answer to the question - too short perhaps to be altogether satisfactory - is the following: "Both the abnormal demographic structure of the urban population and the miserable housing conditions are main reasons for the most ominous fact of urban life, i.e. the deterioration of the family" - J.H.A. Logemann "The characteristics of urban centres in the East". in Eastern and Western World, The Hague, Bandung, p. 95.

2/ Bert F. Hoselitz, op. cit., p. 179.

individualism, and "progress" generally, began to undermine the strength and vitality of the traditional family. Reports of frictions and strains antedate the recent burst of industrialization and urbanization. Cause and effect are intertwined. On the one hand, "in the family, the authority of the elders - who traditionally decided what plot of land should be sold, bought, leased, or rented, who should marry whom and what dowry should be offered, how the work has to be assigned to the members of the family, etc. - is increasingly opposed by the judgment of younger men,"1/ and "in recent years ... disrupting tendencies have set in and disintegration of the joint family has already begun."2/ This tendency may help to condition the younger men for departure from the village. At the same time, life in the town may not be conducive to the type of family life they would have liked to substitute.

It cannot be repeated too often, however, that rural-urban migrants do not by any means constitute a homogeneous group. Some move as individuals, others in family groups. Although the impact of the change, of the sudden introduction to urban life, is likely to be sharp in all cases, it may be useful to divide the urban immigrants into three broad groups: unmarried individuals; breadwinners leaving wife and children behind; and the conjugal family consisting of husband, wife and minor children.

/ In the first

1/ Preliminary Report of the World Social Situation, op. cit., p. 180.

2/ S. Chandrasekhar, "The Hindu Joint Family", Social Forces, Vol. 21, No. 3, March 1943, p. 333.

In the first case, the family problem is least serious. In a situation of agricultural under-employment, the absence of a member of the family is not likely to undermine its economic welfare, and indeed cash contributions sent by him from the city may help to raise the village family's level of living. His departure will have weakened the cohesion of the family and, by example, may affect the cohesiveness of other families in the village. The migrant himself will have far greater demands placed on him for adaptation and adjustment. That these may tax him severely is clear. The position at its worst is described in the following statement, made with reference to another area but apparently intended to be of universal applicability:: "The individual who breaks his family ties to such an extent that he practically loses contact with his family has no roots and, therefore, is unstable and dissocial."[1/] The influx of large numbers of unattached men creates or aggravates a number of social problems that indirectly and in the long run have repercussions on family life. Several Far Eastern cities, not unlike some in Europe and in other continents, face serious problems of prostitution. Equally grave may be the prevalence of non-marital unions, giving rise to large numbers of children born out of wedlock and of unmarried mothers.

In the case of the man leaving his wife and children in the village, the situation is far more complicated. As already mentioned, his absence in the town may be short or long, he may return to the village frequently or only rarely. In any case, the wife and children are deprived of those forms of emotional security that a husband and father normally provides. The wife is likely to suffer most. Surrounded as she often is by in-laws only, sometimes hostile,[2/] any protection she may have had from her husband is no longer available to her.

/The children

1/ En Mesa Redonda, Testimonio, No. 54, August-September 1953, Bogota, Colombia, quoted in Causes and Effects of the Rural Exodus, Pan-American Union, Washington, D.C., 1953, p. 26.

2/ S. Chandrasekhar, "The Hindu Joint Family", op. cit. p. 333 ; Shu-Ching Lea, "China's Traditional Family, its characteristics and distintegration", American Sociological Review, Vol. 13 No. 3, June 1953, p. 277.

The children would seem to fare best. Still enjoying the affection of mother and grand-parents, they also have the company of cousins and other contemporaries in the village community. The husband's position in the urban area is somewhat similar to that of the bachelor, except that his obligations to the family back in the village are much greater. The extent to which he meets them will of course vary. One of the great dangers is that of his forming a second quasi-family in the town that will compete with the village family for his earnings and affections. It is partly this state of affairs that has led to the observation that "the instability of the urban family results in increasing numbers of deserted mothers and abandoned children."[1/]

When the entire conjugal family - husband, wife and children - makes the move to the town, the full impact of urbanization is directly felt, of course, by every member. The nature and extent of this impact will vary from family to family; it varies, apparently, according to the physical lay-out of the town, and it is different in the smaller urban centre and in the large metropolis. Often, the family does not, and cannot, know whether its stay in the town is going to be a permanent one. This doubt produces an ambivalence of feeling. The family is now urban, but it was rural yesterday and may be so again tomorrow.[2/] The incentive to form attachments in the city, to become integrated into urban life cannot be strong. Hence the effort may not be worthwhile and the family becomes unstable, neither urban nor rural.[3/] This difficulty is often aggravated by other factors. Many large towns are surrounded by a semi-urban fringe which is the natural stopping-off place for the recent

/arrival from the

1/ United Nations, Processes and Problems of Industrialization in Under-developed Countries, op. cit., p. 124.

2/ In many industrialized countries a strong tendency has been noted, and fully documented, for rural-urban migration to take place in stages, that is to say successively from village to small town, from small town to larger town, and so on. In the countries in earlier stages of industrialization there is insufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the process there is similar. It is therefore assumed that the bulk of rural-urban migrants move directly from villages to towns of various sizes. For confirmation of this assumption, in the case of Japan, see "Aspects of Urbanization in ECAFE Countries", op. cit., p.6.

3/ Bert F. Hoselitz, op.cit. pp. 175-176.

arrival from the country.[1] This fringe combines some of the features of urban and rural life. It may accentuate the disadvantages of both. Often improvements planned for the urban population are too far away for the newly arrived family to benefit from them. Rural improvement schemes are likely to be concentrated in areas more typical of village life.

The family in urban surroundings is an entity quite different from its former self. It is a unit socially and economically divorced from the relatives with whom its members are likely to have lived and worked in the village. In India, the change has been said to result in "the improved status of women, the decline in the despotism of the joint family ruler as well as the mother-in-law, and the lesser vogue of purdah or the veil and, in general, the increasing reorientation of the alignment of family relations from mother and son to husband and wife."[2] Nevertheless, "the urban wife... finds herself without the functions that gave her a definite status in the traditional system."[3] The function, in particular, that she is no longer able to fulfill may be that of preparing her children for adult life. The children raised in the city are likely to enter occupations with which the mother is hardly familiar, and the very exigencies of industrial and commercial work and urban life for which preparation is needed are those with which she is herself only becoming acquainted. It appears, in fact, often to be the case that the children are the agents in integrating the family into urban life, rather than vice-versa. The children, less steeped in tradition, quickly become knowing in the ways of the city, and help the mother who tends, at the beginning at least, to remain somewhat secluded, to

/become acquainted

1/ "The urban and rural may jostle together in towns and cities, but the preponderant part of the so-called urban population of Burma appears to be, for all practical purposes of city life, largely rural minded" - United Nations, Social Services in Burma, TAA 173/85/04 (Report No. TAA/BUR/0), 1 October 1955, p. 3. Similar descriptions can be found for most other countries of the region. See, for instance, Ll.M. Nugroho, "Some political aspects of urbanization in Indonesia", in International Institute of Differing Civilizations, op. cit., pp. 504-505.

2/ B.K. Madan, "The Economics of the Indian Village and its Implications in Social Structure", International Social Science Bulletin, Vol. III, No.4,

3/ Rhona Sofer, Family Problems in a Society of Early Industrialization, Paper presented at the World Population Conference, 1954, UN document E/CONF. 13/378, p. 13.

become acquainted with these ways. In cases where the language spoken in the city is different from that current in the family's village, the children are likely to learn the new language most quickly and the mother may do so more slowly than the rest of the family. The children become interpreters and, in a way, the best language instructors. On the other hand, the father, newly but fully immersed into the new life, may be of considerable help in preparing his children for urban life. But new influences will be at work too : the schools, city-bred contemporaries, and even media of mass information may provide training and knowledge not obtained, or required, in the village. This may, at the same time, be productive of frictons in parent-child relationships. The seeds of friction exist both in the difference in the rates at which the parents and the children become adapted, and in the almost inevitable reduction in parental authority and supervision, the first resulting from the fact that respect is corroded by the apparent "backwardness" of the parents.

The fate of the children, the most adaptable members of the family, is apt to vary most, according to the conditions of the particular towns. So far as physical amenities are concerned, "hardly any of the cities in the region have open spaces adequate to provide healthful exercise for young people ; none have well-equipped and properly supervised playgrounds for younger children in poor neighbourhoods."[1/] That is not to say that there are no advantages. For instance, "it is clear that maternal and child welfare schemes are easier to organize and operate in urban areas."[2/] The material aspects of children's lives in the rapidly growing cities of under-developed countries tend, on the whole, to be unsatisfactory. The psychological adjustment to urban life, and the changes that occur in parent-child relationships are less susceptible to evaluation. On the one hand, the reduction in the size of the family is likely to lead to closer relationships with parents. At the same time, however, the smaller family is much less of an all-inclusive unit. Various functions, particularly the economic, may no longer be a family affair. Home and work often become separated. The father is likely to be absent during much of the day earning a living. Furthermore, various allurements of the city may compete with his attachment to his family. /Very often

1/ United Nations, Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation, op. cit., p. 178.

2/ S.S.B. Gilder, Chief, Technical Information Unit, Division of Organization of Public Health Services, World Health Organization, "Urbanization and Social Medicine", in International Institute of Differing Civilizations, op. cit., p.77.

Very often the mother will also work. This indeed may be part of the reasons for the family's migration. The improvement in the status of women in an urban setting, noted above, is to some extent due to their ability to obtain employment. The employment opportunities for women, whether the wives of in-migrants from the villages or unattached, although limited by the generally low level of skill they are able to achieve, are expanding. The studies of the lives of working mothers in the Asian cities are fragmentary and do not give a clear picture of whether the change from rural family employment represents an improvement in her position.[1] To an increasing extent the mother's work will take her out of the home for substantial parts of the day and raises a problem of supervision of children that is unlikely to exist in the village, where the mother would be working in close proximity to the children, and where other family members would be available for this purpose. This factor is related to the general question of the employment of children in urban areas.

Child labour

Economic activity by children is very wide-spread and even traditional in many countries of the region.[2] In the village, the child, within its limits, contributes to family production. "The child in such a society is simply protected from exploitation for another's gain. But with the impact of the money economy, ... the employment of children both inside and outside their homes can be used by outsiders for their own ends without regard to the children's welfare."[3]

Two types of legislation are intended to limit the incidence of child labour.[4] Most of the countries have laws setting lower age limits for the

/employment of

1/ For a strong argument that it does not, see D.P. Mukerji, "The Dual Role of Women". Paper presented to International Alliance of Women, August 1955 (Doc. No. C 50/1955), p. 2.

2/ International Labour Organisation, Measures for the Protection of Young Workers in Asian Countries (Asian Regional Conference, Tokyo, Sept. 1953) Geneva, 1953, pp. 15 ff.

3/ United Nations, Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation, op. cit. p. 175.

4/ Other forms of regulation of the employment of children and young persons, of course, exist and have been recommended. They include provisions for medical examinations to determine physical fitness, limitation of working hours in general and night work. See International Labour Organisation, op. cit., pp. 86 ff.

employment of children, at least for some occupations. The ages specified range from 14 to 12. School attendance requirements also, indirectly and theoretically, set lower limits. These latter regulations are often unenforceable. Not only does general poverty sometimes make the child's financial contribution to the family budget essential, but shortages of educational plant and personnel nullify attendance requirements. Minimum-age laws are also difficult to enforce. Where this can be done, it is most likely that the provisions will be applied most rigorously to large and often efficient and healthy, enterprises. As a result "... children have been kept out of the larger factories, where conditions are relatively good, and are to be found in small back-street undertakings where conditions are unregulated and may be much worse."[1/]

These conditions, combined with the lack of parental supervision already mentioned, contribute to the engagement of large numbers of children and youths in many kinds of so-called street occupations. These activities, often of a questionable if not entirely illicit nature, are held to be generative of much of the juvenile delinquency that is an almost regular feature of urban life.

The children's lives in the city are also apt to be affected much more than in the village by family break-ups. Quite apart from the question of whether separation and divorce are more likely to occur in an urban rather than a rural environment,[2/] the results of a divorce are much more serious for the children, when the extended family no longer exists. The absorption of the divorced wife and her children into her family's household does not present anything like the problem posed by an urban wife responsible for children, and having to earn enough herself for rent, clothes, food and other necessities.[3/]

/The most

1/ Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation, op. cit. p. 112.

2/ Higher divorce rates in towns may of course signify many different things, of which the de facto right of wife to a divorce is only one. The ability to obtain employment increases the wife's independence and may cause her to seek a divorce, while in the village she might be a burden to her family. Similarly marital discord may be increased by the city's many other stresses, whereas in the village the seeds of this discord may be diluted in the broader harmony of the extended family. Desertion, also, is not only more likely to occur in the town than in the city, but will leave the urban wife in a much harsher position.

3/ Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, Industrialization and Social Welfare, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, November 1955, pp. 54-56.

The most radical form of family dissolution, death, has the most terrible effect on city children. In the village, the death, or even both parents will not rob a child of all affection and security. Relatives of various degrees will protect and rear the orphan. In the city, only a little after the age of infancy has been passed, the orphan will try to fend for himself, economically and socially. For the younger child even the better orphanages, and they are rare, will hardly offer the same advantages as his kin's protection.

Contrasts between the urban and rural environment

In a discussion of rural-urban migration, emphasis is often necessarily placed on the contrasts between the rural and the urban areas and ways of life. This emphasis must not be allowed to obscure the many similarities. The village is becoming increasingly urbanized, and the towns still have many characteristically rural features. The differences between cities containing large industrial enterprises that employ much of the population, on the one hand, and towns that have grown as commercial, governmental and cultural centres, on the other, are considerable. Many of the large towns of the region are in the latter class. Their economic life, although based on a money economy and no longer agricultural, allows much scope for the continuation of family enterprise. This applies to various types of manufacturing, cottage and handicrafts industries, retail trades and many kinds of personal and similar services. While in the extreme case, therefore, the change from rural to urban surroundings involves a change from collective, family-type economic activity to an individualized one, typified by factory employment, many variations are found between this extreme and the opposite extreme where relatively little changes but the locale of the families' residence and work. The sharpness of the contrast is also reduced by the urbanization of villages. This is a general process, varying in the different villages, and from country to country. It involves increasing familiarity, through general use, with all types of manufactured goods ranging from sewing machines and bicycles to metal cooking utensils, it also involves the merchanization of some village crafts, and

/increasing

increasing contact with the urban world through the cinema and the radio.[1]

It is thus extremely important, in analyses of the process of urbanization, that a proper balance be struck, that the exceptional not be considered the typical, nor the rare occurrence the general state of affairs. The infinite gradations that exist may be as important as the over-all trends that may be more easily discernible. The great variety that exists in family structure and family functions is necessarily reflected in the differences in the kinds and degrees of adaptation to urban life that are required.

Certain features are characteristic of many towns of the region. By and large their growth, like that of the movements that give rise to it, is unplanned. The towns tend to expand faster than physical facilities and social services are, or often can be, provided. Therefore, "... the rapidly developing industrial city in this part of the world has recapitulated all of the evils through which the industrial city elsewhere has passed. Housing conditions, working conditions, recreational facilities, and sanitary conveniences have all been incredibly bad, and food has been scarce and unwholesome."[2] These conditions are not simply the results of urban life. The reflect, at least to a degree, the extent of rural destitution and agricultural stagnation. The warning has indeed been voiced that "rural distress is in danger of being replaced by urban distress, with a cruel waste of human lives and productive resources."[3]

/It is primarily

1/ Some industrialized villages are described in M. Nash, "Some notes on Village Industrialization in South and East Asia", Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. III, No.3, April 1955, pp. 271-277.

2/ Kingsley Davis, op. cit., p. 136.

3/ United Nations, Proceedings of the World Population Conference, op. cit., p. 93. The persistence of some rural ways - and evils - is illustrated in the following extract : "... child labour in factories may be regarded as a continuation of the much less harmful rural custom of child labour on the farm; and urban slums often reveal a carry-over to cities of rural methods of house construction, refuse disposal, use of water, and so on." - United Nations, Problems and Processes of Industrialization in Under-Developed Countries, op. cit., p. 119.

It is primarily the lamentable conditions of the physical environment within the city to which have been attributed the adverse effects of urbanization on family life.[1/] But as with may other aspects of urbanization it must be stressed that the contrast between urban and rural conditions, even with regard to housing, can be easily exaggerated. In the field of housing the very concentration of large numbers of people, and of dwellings, in the confined areas of the towns is likely to strike the observer, and similarly bad conditions in villages, because hundreds rather than hundreds of thousands of people are involved in one locality, may escape his notice.

Review of Social Implications

This brief survey of the effects of urbanization on family life has tried, on the whole, to pose questions rather than to supply answers. It may be useful to group the questions together, not so much because it will then become easier to answer them, but because discussion on what the questions should be might help to indicate the direction social research on the family should take. Furthermore, discussion of, and agreement on, the major questions could bring out the fields in which social action is most needed. There is very wide agreement that the process of urbanization poses a great challenge to governmental authorities at all levels, to voluntary agencies, to employers and other entrepreneurs, as well as, of course, to the individuals who are most directly involved. While even the greatest awareness of the problems will not be enough to provide solutions, without it either no attempts will be made or they will be misguided and doomed to failure.

The first question, or rather consideration, concerns the quantitative assessment of the situation. Information on rural-urban migration, including the number of migrants, their composition by sex and age, and family status, and

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1/ Many references to this point could be cited. Two quotations illustrate this view : "In towns and cities the crucial problem to be solved is the deficiency in housing which disintegrates the family with all its bad consequences." - "Conclusions concerning the social aspect", International Institute for Differing Civilizations, op. cit., p. 616 ; and "The primary problem appears to be housing, as inadequate housing lies at the root of so many deficiencies." - J.H.A. Logemann, op. cit., p. 94

so on, is needed not just to provide a measurable phenomenon for study, but rather because this knowledge would help in coping with the numbers who have already migrated and, perhaps even more important, because it makes possible the more intelligent forecasting of what is likely to happen in the future. On this basis a much greater element of planning could be brought to play on the subject. Such planning, conspicuously but often unavoidably, absent in much of the region in the past, could produce rich results in the future.

The scope of planning in regulating rural-urban migration or the growth of cities is limited. The limits are imposed both by the desire to preserve the individual's freedom to choose his place of work and residence, even though the social and economic consequences may be grave, and by the difficulty of forecasting the trends of all the tangible and intangible factors that determine the location of cities and their growth.

Before dealing with the losses caused by the city, losses by the typical Asian family of various characteristics and functions, reference should be made to some positive, although not necessarily beneficial, effects of urbanization. These arise from the huge concentrations of people found in cities. Some urban problems are problems only because large numbers are involved. The proportion of special groups, for instance, in the total population may be no higher in the cities than in the country; spread over all the villages, their members will constitute exceptional cases, but concentrated in the city they assume the features of a mass. This may be true, for example, of the physically or mentally handicapped. The proportion of handicapped people may be higher in the urban than in the rural environment but this is not what causes a problem. A given proportion of mentally defective persons would result in most villages having at the most a few cases; in the city the same proportion would yield thousands. What creates difficulties and requires action in the cities is part of the normal social overhead of village life.

/The family in

The family in the city has been shown to be unable to perform certain functions and to fulfill needs that are regular features of rural life, especially where the joint family prevails. These functions and needs involve both material aspects of life and a number of moral and psychological ones.[1/] The material functions are the easiest to identify and perhaps even to supply urban substitutes for. The non-material ones defy simple identification, and time and ingenuity are required if appropriate urban replacements are to be found.

Unemployment, sickness, old age, widowhood and disabilities are some of the conditions for which provision is made in the increasingly elaborate social security systems of most highly developed countries. In the field of maternal and child welfare, also, progress is being made and many new types of social services are being introduced. In the agrarian communities of Asia some of these services were probably not previously required because the needs that gave rise to them did not exist. Day care services, for instance, are rare where wage employment of women is unknown and children uninterruptedly receive their mothers' care and protection or that of other adult members of the family. Other needs, however, exist irrespective of economic and social systems. These needs the extended family was well fitted to meet. While ill health, old age and orphanhood, for instance, were always handicaps, the family was well able because of its size - and willing - because of its strong emotional attachments - to carry the burdens imposed. Both ability and willingness are reduced in the city. Its ability is not only limited by the smaller size of the family but also by the fact that its level of living depends upon a money income. This income allows but little elasticity. The loss of an income-earner or the addition of a dependent upsets the family's budget and depresses its level of living. When both events are combined, as they so often are, the result for the family may be catastrophic.

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1/ Catherine Bauer, "The Pattern of Urban and Economic Development: Social Implications", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Vol. 305, May 1956, p. 66.

The arising, or the awakening, of individualism affects the willingness to make sacrifices for any but the closest relatives. This new individualism has been considered a factor both giving rise to urbanization and following from it. A degree of individualism must exist in order that members of a joint family may decide to leave it. On the other hand, industrialized and urbanized society sets a premium less on status and kinship and more on individual achievement.

The non-material losses suffered by the family in an urban environment are mainly two-fold. In the extended family there is much scope for the development of many and close personal relationships. What takes their place in the city? "City-consciousness" or "civic pride" is a possible substitute, but it has been found, at least by some observers and for reasons rooted in social history, to be singularly lacking in most of the Asian cities.[1/] In some Far Eastern cities, various types of neighbourhood associations and other fraternal groupings have sprung up, supplying perhaps some of the missing relationships.[2/]

The second type of non-material wants that are more easily supplied in the rural extended family consists of the various psychological satisfactions and rewards connected with the family celebration of religious rituals and such events as births, marriages and deaths. This is a subject of great complexity and one on which much more research appears to be needed. It is true, of course, that religious services are held in the city also, as are weddings and funerals. The fact that the celebrating family is no longer so large, that the event has not been anticipated and prepared for over a long period, that it is not likely to be long remembered as truly memorable, all tend to reduce the satisfaction that the participants will obtain.

/Both types

1/ American Economic Association, "Papers and Proceedings of the Sixty-seventh Meeting", in American Economic Review, Vol. XLV, No. 2, May 1955, p. 186.

2/ Jean L. Combaire, "Economic Change and the Extended Family", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 305, May 1956, p. 51.

Both types of non-material factors contribute to a sense of belonging and a sense of security, not to speak of a sense of fulfilment. Their absence or their reduced importance in city life is likely to produce emotional voids, at least during the period of adjustment. These cannot be filled by social services alone. Mass media of entertainment and communication seek to supply the missing satisfactions, but there is much doubt that they can do so successfully.

One of the questions most frequently raised is whether urban substitutes can be found for the losses in emotional security that the family suffers in the city. It is certainly possible to supply substitutes for the material losses in security, and in this sense it is easier to do so. The social service functions formerly undertaken within the extended family must now be largely the responsibility of the community at large, in one form or another. Much can be done by voluntary agencies, including trade unions and other associational groupings based on common interests, and certain contributions are expected from employers. The demands on the individual and on the smaller family inevitably increase.[1/] But it is the State, the municipal, local or national government, that is asked to bear the major burden of relieving hardships caused by conditions and hazards over which the individual has no control, such as unemployment, old age and so on. The rate at which it assumes the responsibility and the manner in which it carries it out will to a large extent determine whether the changes that urbanization is producing in the family will transform it into a new but viable form. It also remains to be seen whether, in changing its functions, the role of the family will become more limited, or whether relieved of many traditional functions its role will be extended to emphasize the qualitative aspects of human living.

1/ "The gradual break-up of the joint family and the emergence of the small family has increased its economic problems and burdens. Family responsibilities have now to be borne at a comparatively younger age by the head of the smaller family than happened in the joint family" - Indian Planning Commission, quoted in D.P. Mukerji, "The Dual Role of Women", Paper presented to the International Alliance of Women, August 1955, (Document No. C 50/1955), p. 5.